19: Marshall M-6 (Co, 1919) 1923 APL Burma
Karen AP7

CLIMBING THE TODDY-PALM

The trees that are tapped have a bamboo ladder attached, so that the climber can more easily obtain the sap for making liquor.

A LARGE FISH-TRAP

This trap is used by Burmese and Karen in large streams. The bait is fastened to a string which, when pulled, drops the door. A smaller "beu" or Karen trap is seen at the right.

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19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
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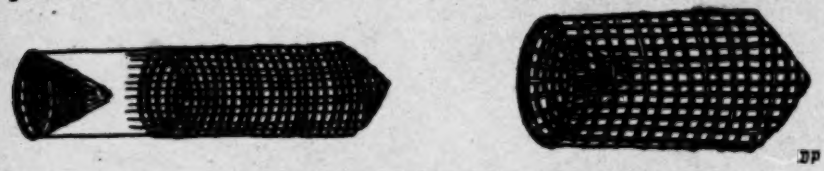
spreading scoop, and is pushed ahead by the one handling it. A longer scoop of similar construction is called a "paw," a name probably derived from the Burmese designation, "pauk."

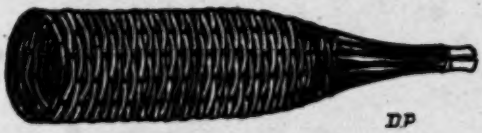
The "pu" is a basket shaped like an Egyptian vase and has a hole near the bottom fitted with a trap-door. It is baited and set in the water. (See page 103.) The fish entering this contrivance are prevented from getting out not only by the trap-door, but also by



DP

CYLINDRICAL FISH-TRAPS

a circle of sharp points converging inwards around the door. There are many forms of basket and cage traps, all built on the principle of the lobster-pot or "pu" just described, either with trap-doors or inward converging bamboo splints through which the fish enter to nibble at the tempting bait. Considerable ingenuity is shown in the construction of some of the basket traps. One type has the shape



DP

BOTTLE-SHAPED FISH-TRAP

of a long-necked wine bottle, but considerably larger. A trap of this shape is made from a joint of bamboo, which is about two inches in diameter. At one end the joint is split into six or eight segments about two-thirds of its length. These are spread far enough open to form the body of the "bottle," being kept in that shape by the interlacing of transverse strips in circles that get smaller toward the neck of the trap. The bottom or open end of this bottle-shaped basket consists of bamboo strips that converge inwards, and as the basket is staked down on its side in a narrow and shallow place in the stream, the fish gain their entrance through the elastic funnel provided for them. The fisherman extracts his catch by spreading open the segments forming the neck of the basket. Another type of the basket trap is cylindrical in shape, three and a half or four feet long, and some four inches in diameter. It, too, has the inward-converging strips of bamboo at one end. Once inside the long and narrow tube, the fish is unable to turn around or, indeed, to do

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1916) 1923 AP1 Burma
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anything except move forward to the front end of the cage in which it finds itself. Sometimes a jar is set low in the shallow narrows of a stream through which the fish are running and, in jumping for the deeper water above or because the watching fisherman purposely frightens them, they fall into the jar ("t' leu"), from the narrow mouth of which they are unable to leap to freedom.

Jars, basket and cage traps, scoops, and small hand-nets are familiar to the Karen fishermen, as we have seen. The hook and line are also in common use, for fish-hooks are a commodity readily obtainable in the bazaars, and earthworms are to be had for the digging. Men and women, to say nothing of children, are, therefore, much given to angling and always seem able to draw fish from any little pool that may be near. Eels are much prized, and double-pointed iron spears afford the readiest means of their capture. On occasion nowadays the rods of an old umbrella are turned into these implements. Seins have been used extensively among the Burmese and by the Karen on the plains, but not much in the hills.

The large catches resulting from seining are obtained by more primitive methods among the Karen. For example, a number of men, provided with baskets ("hsaw") wide and open at the bottom, form a line across a shallow stream and work the bottom foot by foot up the course. The fish either move ahead of the line of advance, or are caught in the baskets. In the latter case the fishermen remove their catches by hand through the round opening in the top of each basket. Sometimes nearly the whole population of a village, old and young, male and female, take part in a fishing expedition in the dry season. As the stream is low, it is barely more than a succession of pools connected by tiny rivulets. Accordingly, they build a dam and throw into the water above it sheaves of a poisonous plant, which they call "xaw hter." This benumbs the fish, without rendering them inedible or impregnating the water to the detriment of the waders. Various members of the crowd, especially the boys and little girls who strip for the purpose, busy themselves in stirring up the water and mud to bring the fish to the surface, where some are already floating apparently lifeless. The older people occupy themselves with hand-nets, scoops, etc., in dipping out their helpless victims. As the water in these mountain streams is often cold and the villagers soon become dripping wet, a fire is built on shore by which they may dry and warm themselves. Many of the persons in the water wear at the waist a small-necked basket in which to drop the fish picked up or, lacking this

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larger strip, which is nearly two yards long and about forty inches wide, are sewed together, and the skirt is finished. The cloth for a man's garment is cut and sewed in much the same way.

III. Mat-Making and Basketry

The making of mats and baskets is almost wholly confined to men, who prepare the materials out of rattan and bamboo and spend their leisure hours weaving them. Common mats ("klau"), such as are used as floor coverings in their houses and to sleep on, and the large ones that serve as winnowing and threshing-floors in the hills,[1] are woven of bamboo strips about half an inch wide in checker-board pattern. The strips do not run parallel with the edges of the mat, but diagonally at an angle of forty-five degrees. The better and stronger mats are made of strips with the silicious outer surface intact, giving them a smooth and glossy appearance. The softer rush mats of Burmese manufacture are often found in Karen houses, but are not made by any of the occupants, except such as have learned the art from their neighbors.

The people distinguish between several different kinds of baskets, for which they have particular names and special uses. The large baskets ("kū") for carrying paddy and other produce from the fields to their houses are shaped like an elongated egg with a truncated smaller end and are slung on the back with a bark-fiber strap which passes over the forehead and attaches to loops on either side a little above the middle of the basket. When thus carried, the receptacle reaches below the waist and a third of its own length above the shoulders. If the bearer is heavily laden, he or she partly relieves the weight on the strap by hooks of horn or bamboo root, hung from the shoulders and supporting the bottom of the basket. These large receptacles are woven in diagonal pattern with small strands of rattan, those of the upper half being less than a quarter of an inch in width while those of the lower half are a little wider. The bottom of such baskets are square and flat, and its edges are bound with round rattans. From the corners rattan stays are run vertically to the large oval mouth of the basket, which is finished off with a large rattan around the edge. A midrib down each side from top to bottom adds strength and durability.

Cotton and vegetables are carried in loosely woven and large-meshed baskets, called "seh," meaning rough or flimsy. A man will

[1] See cuts, p. 82.

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cut a green bamboo, divide it into strips, and weave one of these in a few minutes, and then discard it after he has reached home.

Inasmuch as the people of the Toungoo country have higher hills to climb and longer distances to travel than those dwelling lower down in the Pegu ranges, they carry their produce in smaller baskets than do the latter. These Toungoo baskets have the shape of an inverted pyramid with the apex blunted. Sometimes they are woven of rattan and nicely finished, sometimes loosely made of bamboo splints. In the houses of the Toungoo Hills I have seen enormous spreading baskets for the storage of grain and other things.

The hill people make small, closely woven receptacles for carrying ordinary articles and also for keeping things dry during the rainy season. They render these baskets water-tight by coating them with gum and afterwards with "thitse" (Burmese lacquer). Probably the Karen have copied this type of basket from the Burmese or the Shan, who make extensive use of them. On the plains the small round basket, holding about three pecks, is in constant service. It is Burmese in origin, as is one of its names, "taw" (from the Burmese word, "taung"). Its other name is "na."

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A Karen Matron Weaving under Her House

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Karen APT

Men and Women

848. KAREN WITH DEODY-COCK.

labour out-of-doors till about sixty. The oldest women who can move make their daily journey for water, which is fetched and stored in joints of the giant bamboo. Old men occupy themselves with plaiting mats and baskets, and repairing gear. None are idle. The Karéns are acquainted with the medicinal virtues of many plants, such as bitter barks for ague. But all sickness and misfortunes are ascribed to the *nats*. Offerings and charms are relied on more than medicines. When a person dies, the body is treated with great respect, and every kind of offering is made to propitiate the spirit. The corpse is cremated, and the bones are buried at a place devoted to this use (*ayè-daung*), often at a distance, owing to the migrations of villages. Here a shrine is erected, consisting of a miniature hut, upon which a rude carving of a bird always figures. This symbolizes a mythical creature which conveys the spirit over rivers and chasms on its wanderings. For some time after a death, cotton threads are stretched beside the footbridges for the spirit to pass by on, without meeting the living. A shrine similar to that at the *ayèdaung* is made at a place where two roads cross, and at each shrine the clothing of the deceased, and sometimes new clothing and utensils, are dedicated. It is at funerals that the dreary Karén music is chiefly heard. The tones are very widely contrasted. The dirge is accompanied by the notes of the *pàzi*, a great drum of bronze, cast in the Shan country, in a single piece, though the metal is only the eighth of an inch thick. The *pàzi* is struck on the end with a padded hammer for the deep fundamental tone, and flicked on the side with a stick to bring out harmonics an octave or two higher.

847. DEODY-COCK IN THE CIRCLE OF SILVER.

The *Karaung*, or "Red